

VZCZCXRO3002
PP RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV
DE RUEHLB #0932/01 1771717
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 251717Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2329
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0176
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 0391
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2540
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2837
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RHMFISS/USCENTCOM SPECIAL HANDLING MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIRUT 000932

SIPDIS

NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/YERGER/GAVITO
INL FOR JOHNSON/BLOOMQUIST/STUART
DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/25/2028
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PBTS](#) [EC](#) [GE](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: LEBANON: EC HIGHLY CRITICAL OF GERMAN-LED LEBANON
BORDER PILOT PROJECT

REF: BEIRUT 00812 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: CDA Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) On June 25, a UK Embassy contact in Beirut provided emboff with information on European Commission (EC) Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner's planned statements that day to German Foreign Minister Steinmeier concerning the German-led Northern Border Pilot Project (NBPP) in Lebanon (refs). Waldner's statements express the EC's doubt about future EC funding of the project and concern over the German leadership of the project. These are similar to views expressed by the EC Mission, British and Danish Chief of Missions in Beirut visiting German MFA officials last week. Because of this dissatisfaction with the German-led project, many EU countries may opt to pursue bilateral projects with the GOL on border security. End Summary.

EC OPPOSES FUTURE FUNDING
OF GERMAN NBPP

12. (C) The EC Commissioner in charge of External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and German FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier are to meet June 25 in Berlin to discuss EC concerns about the German-led NBPP, according to UK EmbOff. The NBPP is dependent in large part on funding from the EC. According to UK EmbOff, Ferrero-Waldner's brief to Steinmeier states, strongly, the clear message that EC funding may not be able to support the German project if the concerns of the Commission and other EU donors were not adequately addressed in planning for the next phase of the project. EU Chief of Mission Beirut Patrick Laurent has conveyed the same message to Charge d'Affaires. The EC does not support the recommendations of the German-drafted evaluation report, including a proposal to create a Lebanese National Border Police Force.

EC DOES NOT SUPPORT
CURRENT GERMAN LEADERSHIP

13. (C) The EC is also concerned with the lack of Lebanese ownership of the project (as are other donors). Secondly, the EC is concerned about the current German leadership on the project. The EC may accept continued German leadership, provided others - including the Lebanese themselves - had more of a say in the process, according to our UK contact. The EC recommended forming a Lebanese steering committee composed of the leadership of all GOL security agencies (to include the Prime Minister's office and Ministry of Justice officials). However, German officials oppose any structured hierarchy that does not have Germany in charge, our UK contact said.

EC OPPOSES GERMAN RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR CONTINUED FUNDING OF NBPP

14. (C) Lastly, the EC opposes the specific German recommendation for further EC funding through the twinning process (twinning funding is given to EU Member States to partner with an EU candidate country to help the candidate harmonize their government institutions to EU standards). The EC believes it is unwise to fund such a project while GOL agencies continue to disagree amongst themselves, thereby limiting the scope for broad political buy-in that is necessary for the project's success.

POLITICS MAY KEEP
GERMAN NBPP ALIVE

BEIRUT 00000932 002 OF 003

15. (C) Our UK contact emphasized that while the EC's concerns were of a practical nature, the issue was very much a political one, too. While the EC message as drafted is strong, our UK contact said he could not discount Ferrero-Waldner softening it following sustained, high-level German lobbying, especially as Germany is the largest single contributor to the EC's budget. If the EC decides to continue financial support to the German NBPP, the UK contact speculated that a further \$3 million could be made available in 2009.

16. (C) In addition, the EC had not yet looked at what other funding might be available for complementary work in this area, should they withdraw support for the NBPP. Another compromise option for the EC is funding to provide experts to assist the GOL in coordinating a joint position. However, the Germans will not be keen on this idea because it would add to existing pressure on them to allow greater GOL ownership, according to the UK contact. (Note: Our UK contact added that the GOL may prefer bilateral German assistance because the Germans seem "not to mind giving equipment and materials to the GOL without holding GOL officials accountable for project performance." End Note.)

EC HAS NOT
GIVEN UP HOPE

17. (C) Our UK contact said the EC COMs have not given up hope of persuading the Germans to come around to the EC view, however. The EC COMs recognize that by ceasing EC funding they could lose influence in an important area of work. But ultimately if this were to happen, the EC COMs would explore other options, including the possibility of acting as a "coordinator" for activity in this field, he said.

UK WANTS TO PULL OUT
FROM UNDER GERMAN LEAD

18. (C) Our UK Embassy contact believed the EC will compromise on a solution that allows for a German lead, along with a steering committee. Germany will most likely create

the steering committee, but it will have no authority and will ultimately waste the \$3 million of EC money, he complained. He added that the UK Embassy has recommended to London that the UK pull out of the NBPP and move forward bilaterally with the GOL on future border security projects (reftel). He expected an answer from London by July 1.

GERMAN HOSTED LUNCH
HIGHLIGHTS EC'S CONCERNS

¶9. (C) Many of the EC's concerns were highlighted in a lunch the German Ambassador hosted for Charge and other NBPP donor Chief of Missions in Beirut on June 17 to meet with Peter Wittig, Director General for Global and UN Affairs of the German MFA (and a former Ambassador in Beirut). The Germans hosted the lunch to discuss the German evaluation report's findings and recommendations concerning the NBPP (Note: The evaluation report that the Germans handed over to Prime Minister-designate Siniora was not the previously agreed upon version that the EC put together. The Germans had agreed to submit the EC's evaluation report; however, Germany changed its mind at the last minute and decided to move ahead with its own version. End Note.)

¶10. (C) The UK Ambassador expressed her country's view that it may have to reconsider its support for the German-led NBPP if the Germans handed over their version of the report. The EU Head of Delegation also expressed his strong belief that Wittig not hand over the German report to the PM designate's office. Laurent said that the EC did not agree with the recommendations and finding of the German report and that some facts in the report were incorrect. He was referring to

BEIRUT 00000932 003 OF 003

statements that the report was written with the full cooperation and consultation of all donor countries, and that the Common Border Force was operational and all NBPP facilities and outposts were fully powered. The Germans tried, but failed, to find some common ground with their EU colleagues at the tense lunch and submitted their report the next day, June 17, to PM-designate Siniora

¶11. (C) EU COMs met again after the lunch on June 17 to further express their concerns to Wittig. EU COMs believed that the German report is light on findings and heavy on recommendations. The Germans will undoubtedly reject the idea (again) of a GOL led steering committee. The German delegation said privately that they will not accept any international border security coordination group that did not have a German lead. The German delegation also stated that the MOU signed between the Merkel/Siniora governments in 2006 gives Germany full oversight over all border security donations/projects from the international donor community.

COMMENT

¶12. (C) The Northern Border Pilot Project has been plagued from the start by poor German leadership. In addition, the idea that the GOL is ready to establish a fifth security agency responsible for border control is naive on the German part given current GOL budgetary and manpower constraints.

¶13. (C) We assess that the UK and other EC member governments will continue their support to Lebanon on border issues in a bilateral manner, sans Germany. UK and EC officials have also indicated their willingness to coordinate with the U.S. on future bilateral border projects. End Comment.
SISON